

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ASMARA 00258 241542Z

51

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SSO-00 INRE-00 NSCE-00 PM-03

NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 L-02 INR-07 CIAE-00 DODE-00 OC-05

CCO-00 OCL-00 EB-07 OPR-01 COME-00 FEAE-00 (ISO)W

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O 241430Z FEB 75

FM AMCONSUL ASMARA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 3213

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

USCINCEUR IMMEDIATE

CINCUSNAVEUR IMMEDIATE

COMIDEASTFOR IMMEDIATE

NAVCOMMU ASMARA IMMEDIATE

NAVCOMMSTA NEA MAKRI IMMEDIATE

DIRNSA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASMARA 0258

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, PFOR, ET, US

SUBJECT: CALL ON NEW ADMINISTRATOR OF ERITREA

REF ADDIS ABABA 2113

1. FINALLY ABLE TODAY TO CALL ON GENERAL GETACHEW, NEWLY APPOINTED MARTIAL LAW ADMINISTRATOR IN ERITREA FOR COMBINED INITIAL CALL AND BUSINESS MEETING. CONSULAR COLLEAGUES ALSO CALLED ON HIM TODAY. AS ACTING DEAN OF THE CORP, I SAW HIM FIRST ACCOMPANIED BY SENIOR MAAG ADVISOR (EUCOM REP), AND CINCUSNAVEUR REP.

2. FOLLOWING PRELIMINARY COURTESIES, I TOLD GENERAL GETACHEW THAT WE ARE DESPERATELY SHORT OF MOGAS AND, AS INDICATED IN THE NOTE PRESENTED BY THE EMBASSY TO FOREIGN MINISTRY, FEB 21, (A COPY OF WHICH I GAVE HIM) UNLESS WE RECEIVE A SUPPLY OF GAS SOON ADEQUATE TO OUR REQUIREMENTS, WE WOULD BE FORCED TO SUSPEND
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 ASMARA 00258 241542Z

OPERATIONS AT ALL U.S. INSTALLATIONS, INCLUDING THE KAGNEW POWER

PLANT. THE GENERAL INDICATED THAT MOD ADDIS HAD BEEN IN TOUCH WITH HIM SATURDAY ON THE PROBLEM. THE PRESENT DIFFICULTY HE SAID IS A SHORTAGE OF DRIVERS TO BRING TANKERS TO MASSAWA AND BACK. HE INDICATED HE BELIEVED THAT THE PROBLEM HAD BEEN SOLVED AND STATED THAT A CONVOY HAD LEFT ASMARA FOR MASSAWA YESTERDAY AND EVEN NOW WAS PREPARING TO RETURN. (COMMENT: THIS HAS PROVED TO BE UNTRUE). HE SAID WE WOULD GET OUR MOGAS. I THEN ASKED HIM, IF FOR WHATEVER REASON THIS MOGAS NOT FORTHCOMING SHORTLY, WOULD HE HAVE ANY OBJECTION TO OUR BRINING OUR OWN SUPPLY OF FUEL BY AIR. HE DID NOT ANSWER THIS DIRECTLY, BUT EQUIVOCATED, INSISTING THAT THERE SHOULD BE NO PROBLEM WITH MOGAS. THE GENERAL DID TAKE NOTES ON THE QUANTITY OF MOGAS WE REQUIRE (APPROX. 1,000 GALLONS A WEEK). WHEN HE ASKED ABOUT DIESEL FUEL, COMMANDER EMERSON OUTLINED DIESEL FUEL SITUATION. NOTING THAT OUR SUPPLY IS ADEQUATE FOR THE MOMENT FOR CURRENT USE, (WHICH INCLUDES POWER SUPPLY TO 2ND DIV AND NAVY), BUT IF AND WHEN WE BEGIN TO SUPPLY ASMARA WITH POWER OUR DIESEL REQUIREMENT WILL QUADRUPLE.

3. I THEN TOLD THE GENERAL THAT I AM GREATLY CONCERNED FOR THE SAFETY OF THOSE NOW LIVING ON THE CONSULATE GENERAL COMPOUND IN VIEW OF THE FACT THAT ON FOUR OCCASIONS DURING THIS MONTH, THE COMPOUND HAS BEEN IMPERILED BY MILITARY ACTION DIRECTED AT THE ETHIOPIAN NAVY HEADQUARTERS DIRECTLY ADJACENT. I ASKED HIM IF IT IS TRUE THAT NAVY HEADQUARTERS IS SCHEDULED TO BE SHIFTED ELSEWHERE IN SEVERAL MONTHS, AS I HAD HEARD, AND THAT IF THIS IS THE CASE WHETHER THE MOVE COULD BE ACCELERATED. WITH A STRAIGHT FACE, THE GENERAL ASSURED ME THAT I NEED NOT BE CONCERNED BECAUSE NOTHING LIKE THAT WOULD HAPPEN AGAIN. HE SMILED WHEN I THANKED HIM FOR THIS ASSURANCE AND SAID I WOULD COME AND SEE HIM IF IT DID HAPPEN AGAIN.

4. JUST BEFORE LEAVING I ASKED THE GENERAL IF THERE IS ANYTHING CONCERNING HIS CURRENT OPERATIONS THAT HE WOULD LIKE ME TO PASS ON TO MY EMBASSY IN ADDIS. HE SAID NOT AT THIS TIME, PERHAPS LATER.

5. COMMENT: THE GENERAL WAS PLEASANT AND CONFIDENT AND RADIATED DETERMINATION. I HOPE HIS PATIENCE WAS NOT TRIED TOO MUCH WHEN MY SUDANESE AND FRENCH COLLEGUES LATER TAXED HIM WITH THEIR FUEL PROBLEMS AS THEY EARLIER INDICATED TO ME THEY WERE GOING TO DO. THROUGHOUT MY CONVERSATION WITH GENERAL GETACHEW, THE MUFFLED CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 ASMARA 00258 241542Z

SOUND OF BOMBS EXPLODING TO THE NORTHWEST OF ASMARA COULD BE HEARD BUT REMAINED UNACKNOWLEDGED BY ANY OF THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE CONVERSATION.

6. I HAVE SUBSEQUENTLY LEARNED THAT FOLLOWING MY VISIT THE GENERAL SUMMONED THE REPRESENTATIVES OF MOBIL, TOTAL, AGIP, AND SHELL TO THE PALACE AND DEMANDED THAT THE PROBLEM BE SOLVED. WE HAVE IT ON GOOD AUTHORITY (HEAD OF ONE OF THE TRANSPORT FIRM INVOLVED)

THAT, NOTWITHSTANDING GENERAL GETACHEW'S ASSURANCES, NO CONVOY
HAD YET LEFT FOR MASSAWA AS OF MIDDAY (FEB 24). WE HAVE BEEN TOLD
THAT DRIVERS ARE BEING FLOWN BY EAL FROM ADDIS TO TAKE THE TANKERS
TO MASSAWA AND BACK BUT HAVE NO CONFIRMATION OF THIS. THE ONLY THING
THAT IS DEFINITE IS THAT WE NOW HAVE A SIGNED AUTHORIZATION FROM
THE ARMY FOR 6,000 LITERS OF MOGAS.
SHERRY

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